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ABSTRACT

The Open University of Great Britain provides home-based instruction to nearly 50,000 predominantly-working students via broadcasts and correspondence. Each unit of instruction consists of a combination of text, broadcasts, cassette recordings, assignments, and experiment kits. The per student cost of this delivery system is impressively low, especially when the large initial capital outlay is divided among large numbers of students. A professional production staff is necessary to maintain these low costs. For the student, broadcasters can act as organizers, synthesizers, pacers, study guides, role models, and recruiters. Professors have been required to master a variety of media techniques, although they are assisted in their course production by specialists trained in the proper mixing of multimedia presentations. (EMH)

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AUDIO-VISUAL COMMUNICATION IN THE UNIVERSITY

Palais de Congrès, Liège, 24-28th September 1973.

THEME IV

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY AND THE BBC

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(Talk delivered in French: French version available on request).

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Mr. J. Radcliffe

Mr. Chairman, before addressing myself to my theme I would like to thank you on behalf of Dr. Bates and myself for the great privilege of attending this conference and being able to address you this afternoon as emissaries from the English speaking world. Perhaps I may be forgiven for taking as the key-note of what we'll be saying a quotation from the Minister of Culture in the French government earlier this year. He said that : "The French have a great gift for defining rules without always applying them; the British excel in applying rules they have neglected to define". This is particularly true of the Open University, in which we have been so busy finding out ways of doing things that we've had very little time to define our rules. The whole field of the application of television to higher education is such a new one that it is a bold man who states principles or even elaborates theories with any confidence; indeed I think that at the Open University we've probably raised more questions on this theme than we've provided answers. However, what we can bring you is the fruit of a good 800 television programmes and 800 radio programes during that time, so I hope that what we say will be of use if only as a basis for discussion and comparison.

I think it may be useful, as a preliminary, to say something about what is a relatively new institution, the Open University. It's a university in the full meaning of the word; it was established by Royal Charter in May 1969, it has the same status as other British universities, it has its own full-time staff of more than twelve-hundred; it employs nearly six thousand part-time academic staff as tutors and counsellors; and now, in the third teaching year of its life, it has more than forty thousand students. Like other universities it awards its own degrees.

Now these students are essentially different from students in conventional universities in that they are working members of the adult community who are studying in their free time. For 1972 our applicants included housewives, people in the armed forces, administrators, teachers, people in the professions, scientists, engineers, technicians, people working in industry, farming,

in mining, in transport, clerical workers, people working in service industries including shops, retired people, even a few people in institutions, including prisons. About 30% are teachers, about rather over 10% in the professions, about 10% housewives and rather over 10% technicians. An analysis of their present occupation suggests that the students are predominantly middle-class, although in origin they are mainly working class, and there is a small but growing number of manual workers. The students study mostly at home therefore working on set books and specially prepared reading material, and assignments, they follow specially produced television and radio programmes, they sometimes attend one week residential summer schools, and if they wish they can meet with other students, tutors and counsellors week by week at one of the over 280 local study centres up and down the country.

Now the university has a formal agreement with the BBC under which BBC educational staff work with the university staff in BBC studios to produce television and radio programmes for the University. These were conceived as a vital part of the output of the university from the very beginning, and they make up about 10% of the students' work. By agreement between the university and the BBC the television programmes are transmitted on the second BBC network, and the radio programmes are transmitted on our VHF channel three. They currently occupy about 17½ hours of television time and about 16½ hours of radio time each week and they are expected, as the production builds up over the next few years, to increase to at least 30 hours of television time and 30 hours of radio time each week; since they are on the national networks they can be received by more than 95% of the population.

Now as I said at the outset, Dr. Bates and I are talking to you together, we have worked out this lecture jointly, and this is symbolic of something very central to the nature of this university; it is essentially a collective endeavour. Dr. Bates is a member of the Institute of Educational Technology; he's a specialist in the educational use of radio and television and in methods of ascertaining the effectiveness of their use, and he's engaged in a research programme designed to develop knowledge and theory in this field. I have spent the past two and a half years or so as BBC senior producer responsible for the radio and television programmes made for the social science faculty of this university. But we

have worked together very closely, we've sat together as part of a number of groups within the social sciences faculty which are responsible for designing audio-visual materials, we have been colleagues. Now the reason why it is essentially a collective endeavour is that it is an extremely complex highly integrated system, and you shouldn't really consider any part of the system in isolation from the other parts. Our use of television and radio is very different from what it would be if this was a traditional university with radio and television added on so to speak. It is also rather different from what it has been in traditional educational broadcasting where one has tended to think of the radio as the core of the operation and written materials or other activities such as group discussions as essentially secondary. In the Open University we have something which has been planned from the outset as an integrated multi-media system. At present it includes the provision of printed specially-written course material, of recommendations for selected reading by the student, of assignments for testing and evaluating the students' work, some of which are marked by computer, some of which are marked by tutors, it includes face-to-face tuition, study centres, it includes lectures and laboratory sessions and work-shops, field trips, summer schools, it includes home experimental kits for use by the science students, (you can see such a kit displayed over there), it includes the provision of cassette recorders in the case of some courses and it includes broadcast radio and television which is also available in recorded form at study centres up and down the country; and in addition to this it includes the provision in some courses of discs, slides and audio-cassettes. So it's a many-sided, genuinely multi-media system.

Now the broadcasting as I said earlier occupies about 10% of the student's time, so it is only a proportion of the operation as a whole. But it is a very important part of the system for a number of reasons. For example, for our course on Urban Development, a full credit course of 32 units, there are :

17 TV programmes
32 radio programmes
8 gramophone records
32 correspondence texts

and also notes and diagrams which accompany the broadcasts.

First of all the broadcasting media possess certain characteristics which give them certain specific educational possibilities; secondly they give the university the unique possibility of access to national air through the BBC. Thirdly, the broadcasting media are a fairly costly capital intensive part of the system. So this is a resource that the university has to plan the use of very carefully. Before I go on to talk about the way decisions on its deployment are taken, may I hand over to my colleague, Dr. Bates, who will go into a little more detail on the economics of the system, in the context of the economics of the university as a whole.

TONY BATES: THE ECONOMICS OF THE UNIVERSITY

The economics of the university are crucial to its success. The first thing to be said is that the university is a relatively costly institution, in terms of running and capital expenditure, but nevertheless is likely to produce graduates extremely cheaply. Furthermore, it is an extremely effective way of rapidly increasing the supply of graduates. For instance, in our first year of admission we increased overnight the number of students entering science-based undergraduate courses in Britain by 25%. (There were about 34,000 new undergraduates in science-based courses in conventional universities, in 1971. We registered a further 9,000). It also appears that we are more successful in keeping students in the system than originally anticipated. At the end of 1971, 83% of our students continued to the next year. The proportion of registered students gaining credits for each course is about 70% on average. We have already produced 850 graduates, and we expect by 1976 to be producing 7,000 graduates per year. If this figure is reached, it will mean that we will be producing graduates at approximately two-thirds the cost of a conventional university. (On top of that, conventional university students are heavily supported by government grants for maintenance and living expenses, which of course our students are not, since they are working). Thus the following information I shall give you should be seen in this context.

We get our money at the moment directly from the government, covering periods of three years at a time. We are different from other universities in Britain in this respect. Other universities get their money through the University Grants Committee, which contains representatives of all the universities, and also some civil servants from the relevant ministries. The University Grants Committee gets a lump sum from the Government, and the Committee then decides how much each individual university will get. This way, the independence of the individual universities is protected from direct government interference. Getting our money directly from the government has advantages and disadvantages. Since our money is separate from the U.G.C. money, it can be clearly seen that we are an additional cost, and not in direct competition with

other universities for funds. Also, in our rapidly developing and totally new situation, it gives us more flexibility. If unanticipated costs arise, we can negotiate directly with the Ministry for more money. It does mean however that we are open to more direct government interference, and an instance of this is the pressure put on us to take 18 year-old students, as an experiment.

Capital costs, (buildings, roads, etc.) since we started have reached £6 million. At the moment, our annual running costs are between £10 million and £13 million a year. From this amount, we pay the BBC £2 million each year for making 300 television and 350 radio programmes per year. This is meant to cover all BBC costs - administrative, production, transmission facilities, etc. - concerned with the Open University operation. We are therefore not directly subsidised in any way by the BBC - but nor does the BBC make a profit out of the arrangement! Therefore we use BBC facilities at Alexandra Palace in London - the studio in fact from where the first ever public television service was broadcast in 1936. (We are, incidentally, planning to establish a new purpose-built production complex on the university campus where the programmes will be made from 1976 on, but under the same arrangements as we have at present.) The figure of 300 television and 350 radio programmes is to a certain extent related to the optimum output from a one-studio complex, with its associated staff. This is important, because it means that the decision to commit ourself to broadcasting, either in the university's own facilities, or in a longterm relationship with an outside organisation, is what I call a "quantum" decision. You either have no broadcasting, or you have about 300 television programmes a year, to optimise the use of studio facilities, or you have about 600 programmes a year, using two studios. One is able to create some flexibility by the use of film, but, here too, once one has planned for a certain level of output one cannot vary this very much without increasing costs. It is probably true, however, that because we are able to share the use of certain resources with the BBC General Service, like film camera crews, we have rather greater flexibility than if the university was running the whole operation independently. It is essential to make very efficient use of broadcasting resources because 80% of our broadcasting costs are tied up with overheads, studio facilities, salaries, etc., and only 20% with actual cash

expenditure on programmes (film stock, graphics, speakers, videotapes, etc.). Thus the economics of broadcasting, using permanent facilities, fully committed to use by the university, does impose limits on the flexibility of use. For instance, although our course teams have a certain amount of freedom in how they spend their budgets (they can vary the amounts spent on face-to-face tuition, examinations, supplementary material, etc., so long as they keep within an overall total), they have comparatively little freedom regarding broadcasting. John Radcliffe will be telling you about how broadcasts are allocated. Once a course has received its allocation, it cannot save money on the broadcasts, and use this for other purposes, because the BBC has committed itself - on the basis of its agreement with the O.U. - to fully utilising very expensive facilities.

In general, though, this has not proved a major source of contention or difficulty. Much more important, in my opinion, are the restrictions created by the need to maintain very high productivity in the use of the studio, as the BBC does in its general programmes:- this means, in effect one studio day per programme, so as to keep the studio in use nearly every working day. This means you normally have to get it right on the day, because you cannot easily get back into the studio to put things right. It also means that there is not very much opportunity for academics to try out programme formats. It requires a highly professional, disciplined, approach to programme making from both the directors and the academics. It requires very careful preparation of material before getting to the studio. It requires programme and correspondence text production to be carefully scheduled. It sets a real deadline (the studio day) for production of material. And I have exaggerated a little - we do have a little spare capacity, we do give academics and producers workshops where they can try out ideas, we can edit together material on videotape after the recording in the studio, we can occasionally find a free slot for improving a programme - but there are real restrictions in trying out and testing materials <u>before</u> they get finalised into a programme.

Finally, I would like to mention the question of using alternative means to get audio-visual material to our students. It may surprise you to know that broadcasting is by far the cheapest

method available to us. You must remember that we are primarily a home-based teaching institution. We have 45,000 students. At the moment, we have the equivalent of 27 full credits, probably going up to 110 by 1981. Between 16 and 32 times a year, we have to get, for 27 full courses, the audio-visual material into 45,000 individual homes. Broadcasting is by far the cheapest way of doing this, for a number of reasons:

1) The cost of the hardware (TV and radio sets) is born by the student (he's already got them).

2) There are no software costs (film, video-cassettes, postage).

3) Transmission costs are comparatively low (about 10% of the total broadcasting cost).

We have carefully examined alternative methods of distributing audio-visual material, and we find that there is at present no cheaper alternative to broadcast television. In some cases - where student numbers are very low - it is economical to distribute purely audio material in the form of discs or cassettes, but even here the advantage over radio is comparatively marginal. Broadcast transmission is, in fact, an extraordinarily cheap system of distribution, provided of course you have access to a network.

And here we are likely to run into problems as our output expands. We are already having to consider broadcasting in the early morning, between say 6 and 8 a.m., and to broadcast our programmes only once rather than twice; this of course reduces student access. We already have facilities in study centres by which students can view or listen to programmes in recorded form, and we are considering improving these arrangements by the use of video-recording machines. This would however cost us around £100,000 a year, and we may well not proceed with the scheme. In the long run these problems may be solved if time on future new television and radio networks can be made available to the university; you may well have heard of our Vice-Chancellor's public request for the government to bear the needs of the O.U. in mind when allocating the 4th British television network; but this is for the future.

JOHN RADCLIFFE

Now I think it will be useful to say something of how we have used these broadcasting resources in our courses. Like other resources, broadcasting is allocated to the courses produced within each faculty, by a central university committee, on the basis of the characteristics of each course, and its needs. At the outset it was very difficult to decide on what criteria should be used to share out these broadcasting resources between courses since we were in what was virtually a new situation for all of us. The fundamental principle that we've sought to apply is that since each medium of communication posses unique characteristics which enable it to convey some kinds of information better than others, we had to deploy the media in such a way as to exploit these characteristics to the full. There's also been the fact that there are quite serious cost differentials between the different media; television is roughly ten times as costly as radio, so that it has been clearly pointless to do anything on television that could be equally well done on radio; equally, it was pointless to do anything on the radio that could be equally well done in print.

Certain types of course have appeared for one reason or another to need more television than others, like for instance, science-based courses, for which we have used television very extensively for the essential job of demonstrating experiments. But as Dr. Bates will explain there are some characteristics of television broadcasting that make it particularly valuable for particular types of course, and others that are of general value.

TONY BATES: USE OF TELEVISION AND RADIO

Since we are teaching at a distance, and the students may never meet the professors who design the courses, television in particular is important for helping the students to increase their sense of belonging to the University, for reducing the psychological distance between themselves and their teachers. Interestingly, even students in their third year still report this as being a major function of the broadcasts. The importance of identification is one reason why we normally use the professors, and lecturers, rather than professional broadcasters, to present programmes. Broadcasting also appears to act for many students as an organiser of material, for providing synthesis, and for giving an overall view of the kind of approach to the material expected of them. Broadcasting therefore provides some of the implicit guides to learning normally present in face-to-face teaching, but difficult to communicate through printed material. Since many of the programmes are more easily understood in conjunction with the printed material, the broadcasts act as pacers, encouraging the student to move on to the next piece of work, and thus preventing him from being bogged down unnecessarily in one small part of the course - a real danger in teaching at a distance. Broadcasting is important therefore in giving the student a "dynamisme intérieure". Also, we have had to prove our academic excellence to our colleagues in Britain. We have had to show them that our teaching is of the highest standard. Since any professor at any university in Britain can switch on the television while he is having his dinner at home, and watch our programmes, this has been an invaluable method of proving our academic respectability - and incidentally of recruiting new students and high quality staff.

These functions of television - identification, sign-posting, pacing, publicising - apply to all our courses. There are a number of functions however which we have been able to identify for specific courses. Perhaps the most obvious is the use of television for demonstrating scientific experiments or experimental situations. It must be remembered that although our students cannot get to University laboratories on a regular basis, they are sent home experimental kits, which provide a surprisingly wide range of experimental experience, gained in their own homes. They

also attend for each science course an intensive one-week residential summer school at a conventional university. Television therefore is used to provide experimental experience which cannot be fitted into the summer school, or carried out at home. Sc television is used where the equipment or phenomena to be observed are large or inaccessible; where the experimental design is complex; or where the measurement of experimental behaviour is not easily reduced to a single scale or dimension - in other words, where lots of things are all happening at once, such as with human or animal behaviour. Some of these experimental situations are set up in our own studios, in London. I want to show you now an example. It's an extract from a broadcast on the subject of designing transformer cores. (Film example: TRANSFORMER CORES - TS/251/10).

JOHN RADCLIFFE

There are six faculties in the university, the faculty of science, the faculty of technology, the faculty of maths, the faculty of arts, which includes literature, history, fine arts, music and philosophy, the faculty of educational studies, and the faculty of social sciences. The faculty of science, as we've said, has chiefly used television for demonstrating experiments specially mounted in the studio. Since the students clearly could not come to the university's laboratories we had to try to recreate for them the experience of actually seeing experiments carried out. The faculty has also made a good deal of use of live action film of the work of laboratories in other universities, or government or industrial research laboratories. It's probably worth mentioning that because of the special circumstances involved in teaching science at a distance, our scientists have been forced to examine very carefully what skills really need to be learned through laboratory and experimental work, and to seek alternative ways, including television, for achieving these skills. The faculty of technology have also tended to get out into the environment with film cameras a good deal and they've made quite extensive use of documentary film showing examples of various applications of technology. The faculty of mathematics on the other hand have used television a good deal for demonstrating numerical concepts by the use of models and animated diagrams. Here is a short example. This broadcast introduces the concept of vector space, and basically it's an illustrated lecture. EXAMPLE: M201/1. The faculty of Arts have made a very wide range of use of television including the study of the detail of pictures or sculpture, buildings or other artefacts, the use of documentary film to make points about the physical and cultural environment, in which works of art of literature have been created or in which historical events have taken place, the demonstration for students of historical film, for film is an historical document of a sort, also the use of photographs, prints which are of historical relevance, also from time to time of documents. The faculty of educational studies, which incidentally is the one which depends for its students very heavily on the large numbers of teachers who are students at the university, has made very heavy use of specially shot film to

provide students with resource material on educational processes taking place in schools both in Britain and elsewhere in the world. This is part of a course which dealswith the "open curriculum". (The voice belongs to an American teacher,) EXAMPLE: E283/1 The Faculty of Social Sciences, which embraces economics, geography, sociology, psychology, and political science, has made use of nearly all these techniques. The psychologists for instance are using the studio to demonstrate experiments, the economists and geographers to illustrate theoretical concepts with diagrams and models; most social science courses have also made extensive use of documentary film. Now that's a very quick summary but I've given it to you to very briefly indicate the very wide range of use of television by the university.

There's also been a wide, but a perhaps less wide, range of uses of radio including straight lectures, discussions between academics of the university, or between academics of the university and academics from outside it in other universities, discussion programmes involving students, programmes where students can ask academic staff questions about their courses; (these last incidentally benefit from the fact that radio programmes can be mounted at very short notice;) and also documentary programmes where an academic is illustrating a lecture by the use of recorded extracts of people talking on whatever themes are relevant to the theme of his lecture.

Finally I think it may be useful for me to give a brief account of how the decisions which lead to the construction of these programmes are taken, since they are after all based on the relationship between the university and an outside body, the BBC. Well, the formal position is quite straight-forward: a course team is established with the responsibility of making the course materials, and this team includes academic staff, from the various disciplines involved in the course, who will be responsible for writing correspondence material, there may be academics from outside the university in some cases, often there are consultants from outside the university; then there will be BBC staff who will be responsible with the academic staff for making the programmes for radio and television; there will probably be a representative of the university's Institute of Educational Technology who will be

responsible for advising the course team on the design of the course materials, on the structure of the course, and on the evaluation systems built into the course, there'd also probably be a specialist in print design who would look after the publishing side of things.

So the course team is established, this group meets together and it decides on the detailed objectives of the course in terms of student behaviour, and then how the materials including the broadcasting can be designed so as to meet these objectives. The course is usually divided up into units of a week or fortnight's work and the broadcasts for a particular week planned so that they complement the other materials used by the student during that week or that fortnight. The programmes are then made by a team which consists of an academic, who formally is responsible mainly for content, and a broadcaster who is formally responsible mainly for presentation. This was spelt out by the original planning committee for the university which set down in detail a suggestion as to how the relationship between the university and the BBC would work. Here's part of it:

"The radio and television programmes required by the university and provided by the BBC are to be planned on the basis of an educational partnership between the university and BBC staff. In practice this partnership will extend over the whole range from the conception of the course to the final production of the programme. The success of this partnership rests on the recognition of both parties that while effective education is the over-riding objective, and the ultimate responsibility of the university under its charter, each has a specific professional role to play. The university will prescribe the academic objectives and general character of the broadcasts in relation to the other component parts of each course, while the BBC will provide the necessary presentation and production skills. In the overlapping area where the inter-relationship of content and presentation is worked out, a reasonable degree of flexibility on both sides is essential in order to secure the proper concern of the academic staff and the fullest use of the experience of the broadcasting staff".

As that report recognised, in practice of course it is often

impossible to separate form and content; the area of overlap is very great. The movement of a camera in a particular way, the way a film sequence is assembled together, the design or model of a diagram, the timing and pacing of a programme, will all have an influence on the information received by the student. The educational producer is thus forced to be a teacher. And similarly the academic who uses audio-visual material is forced to take account of the subtle and complicated inter-relationship between his teaching points and the characteristics of the medium he is using. He is to some extent forced to become a programme maker. What happens in practice at the Open University is that the two work together as a team, each contributes his knowledge and skills to the final results.

Now I think it's probably worth identifving four factors which in my judgment have particularly helped to make this result possible. First of all there was the acceptance by the university that BBC staff would be members of the course team on the same basis as academic staff and that they would indeed be free to contribute, not only to the technical aspects of the broadcasting, but to the pedagogic design and content of the courses. Secondly, and equally important in my view, the BBC recruited to most of the jobs as programme makers academically well qualified staff; it set up a special department to make programmes for the university. When the BBC set up this department, there were a few senior staff, like myself, who had had long experience of educational broadcasting in other fields, but the mass of the programme makers were men and women coming in from outside the BBC who had experience of research or university teaching, or were in other ways academically well qualified, and were thus equipped to discuss academic issues with academic staff on equal terms. In an extraordinary short space of time these people have in fact become effective programme makers. But they have at the same time developed over the past two or three years that they've been working in the department, very close working relationship with academic colleagues; they are working all the time with the same faculty, very often with the same group of two, or three, or four academic staff, and they identify, not unnaturally, with the faculties. A third factor has contributed very substantially to the effectiveness of this partnership is a very practical one, and it's related to the sheer amount of work

involved in making these courses. Once a course team has been committed to producing a course a tremendous load of work has to be got through in a limited amount of time by all the members of the team, and to get this work done imposes certain imperatives. One might say that since like the European Economic Community the Open University is a complex system, we are, like the Council of Ministers, condemned to find an agreement, and this is not only so between BBC programme makers and academic staff, its also true as between the different academic members of the course teams, and indeed the many other people whom they consult. Fourthly and more positively, there is the fact that since the system is very novel everyone who's been engaged in the common excitement of developing this new enterprise I think is infected by a certain enthusiasm for it, there's a sort of élan which has resulted from the newness of what the university is doing; and although the production directors who are in the BBC department who make programmes for the university are of course BBC staff, they identify themselves strongly with the newness and with the success of the university and this I think too has a strong contribution to make to the success of the system. So that you might say that what one has is a typically British arrangement in which those formal rules which exist are not a particularly good guide as to what actually happens in practice, and what is much more important is the fact that there are these informal relationships. I think it's true to say that the quality of the programmes that are made for the university depends to quite a large extent on the long tradition of making high quality educational programmes that we've built up over the years within television and radio. But I think it's also true to say that if this broadcasting department had not been created in such a way as to establish a very strong sense of identity with the university, and very close personal working relationships in practice, it simply wouldn't have been possible to make programmes which were not only effective in themselves but successful as a part of this very tightly integrated teaching system.

Perhaps I can now leave Dr. Bates to have the last word.

TONY BATES: (CONCLUSION)

Now giving the academic the last work is an example of the tact of the BBC which has made the relationships between t[illegible] work! I wouldn't like you to think that there are no problems or difficulties in two separate organisations like the University and the BBC working together. It's a marriage, and like most good marriages, it needs working at. I would say our main problem is that of access. There is a small percentage of students who cannot get our programmes and increasingly programmes are going out at more and more inconvenient times for students. Because of this and the transient nature of broadcasting, course teams are sometimes reluctant to design courses so that broadcasting is an essential component of the course, for fear of penalising students who miss programmes through no fault of their own. This means that, apart from science, assignments are rarely based primarily on broadcast material, and that some of the potential of broadcasting is not being realised. It would be foolsih to pretend that conflict never arises between producers and academics over the content and presentation of programmes. However, I think the most important - and radical - of all the innovations of the Open University is the idea of the course team. This creates a structure which enables conflict to be controlled, resolved, and directed to creative ends. As an academic, my opinion is that the contribution of the BBC to the academic content and production of materials at the Open University has been tremendous. They have brought a refeshing breath of the outside world to the cloisters of University life. For instance, when we have attempted to collect film evidence to support theoretical concepts in sociology or educational studies, it has become apparent in certain instances that some of these theories just could not be supported in the real world - or were gross over-simplifications of a very complex situation. But I would like to end on a note of caution. The success of the Open University required certain pre-conditions:

1) We were not in direct competition with established universities for funds or students.

2) Although there are departments of adult education in many British universities, adult education has

been the poor relation in conventional universities, and with one or two notable exceptions, like Birkbeck College of London, none give degree courses specifically for adults.

3) We have good national broadcasting coverage, a reasonable postal service, high set ownership (98%), and had, at the time of inception, spare capacity on national broadcasting networks.

4) We have a highly selective educational system, which meant there were large numbers of able but unqualified adults to draw on.

5) We have large numbers of well-qualified teachers in higher education, whom we could draw on for our part-time tutors, and spare capacity for study centres and summer school accommodation in existing educational institutions.

6) We were given high priority by the last Labour government, and continued support from the present government.

7) We have able students - and staff - who are highly committed and very hard working.

8) We took risks, and were lucky.

So it may be that the Open University is particularly suited for Britain but perhaps unsuitable for anywhere else. (I have been told that it is "une idée trop Napoléonienne" for France!). Nevertheless, I am sure there are lessons to be drawn from our use of broadcasting which will have relevance to many institutions.

24th September, 1973.

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